

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1887
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 5198

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: OAS, UY
SUBJECT: OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN MOTEVIDEO

REF STATE 306590

1. WITH APOLOGIES TO MABASSADOR MCGEE AND PEZZULO
AND OTHERS FOR TREADING ON THEIR TURF, THERE FOLLOWS
MY ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL ISSUE.

2. AT VII GA IN GRENAD, URUGUAY LED THE ATTACK ON
THE HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION SPONSORE BY THE US
AND OTHERS. THE URUGUAYAN SPOKESMAN OPENLY INSULTED
IAHRC PRESIDENT ANDRES AGUILAR. ALL IN ALL, URUGUAY
HAS PROVED ITSELF AS INTRANSIGENT AS ANY LATIN AMERICAN
GOVERNMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. URUGUAY
BELIEVES THAT ACCEPTANCE OF MONTEVIDEO ASTHE SITE
OF THE OAS GA WILL SIGNAL THE WORLD THAT AT LEAST
TWO THIRDS OF THE MEMBER STATES FIND URUGUAY'S RECORD
NO HINDRANCE TO HOSTING THIS PRESTIGIOUS ASSEMBLY.

3. I AGREE WITH AMBASSADOR PEZZULLO THAT THE US
SHOULD REQUIRE AS A PRICE FOR ITS SUPPORT A VISIT
TO URUGUAY BY THE IAHRC. WHEN URUGUAY REFUSES, AS IT
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SURELY WILL, WE SHOULD NOT BE TEMPTED INTO NEGOTIATING
WITH URUGUAY ON SUBSTITUTES. ANY ALTERNATE PLAN WILL
CERTAINLY WEAKEN THE IAHRC. URUGUAY'S CHARGE THAT THE
IAHRC ACTS AS PROSECUTOR AND JUDGE IS FALSE AND WE
SHOLD REJECT IT OUT OF HAND. I RECALL THAT CHILE
TRIED TO TEMPT INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION
TO VISIT CHILE IN THEIR PERSONAL CAPACITY. AGUILAR

CORRECTLY REJECTED THIS CYNICAL MANEUVER. THE IAHC SHOULD NEVER PERMIT ANY GOVERNMENT OR ANY PERSON, INCLUDING THE OAS SECRETARY GENERAL, TO NEGOTIATE CONDITIONS FOR AN IAHC VISIT.

4. THE US SHOULD BASE ITS RESPONSE TO THE URUGUAYAN OFFER ON TWO PRINCIPLES OF BASIC IMPORTANCE TO THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION LATIN AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY. FIRST, THE REVITALIZATION OF THE OAS AND SECONDLY, THE STRENGTHENING OF THE IAHC. I PUT THE OAS FIRST BECAUSE (REGARDLESS OF RIVAL THEORIES) A STRONG REGIONAL ORGANIZATION IS BASIC TO A VIGOROUS IAHC.

5. MANY GOVERNMENTS WHICH FAVOR ACCEPTANCE OF URUGUAY'S OFFER WILL CITE PRINCIPLES SUCH AS NOT APPLYING A POLITICAL TEST TO ANY GOVERNMENT IN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM AND THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO REFUSE TO ADMIT ANY INTERNATIONAL GROUP. SOME GOVERNMENTS WHICH SHRINK FROM CONFRONTATIONS MAY ATTEMPT TO FIND PRACTICAL REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO MONTEVIDEO SUCH AS FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS OR INCONVENIENCE. THE US SHOULD AVOID SIDETRACKS. WE SHOULD PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY DECLARE THAT THE US OPPOSES URUGUAY'S OFFER BECAUSE IT WOULD BE INCONGRUOUS AT A TIME WHEN MANY COUNTRIES WITH HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEMS ARE STRIVING TO IMPROVE, TO REWARD WITH THE SEAT OF THE OAS ONE CONFIDENTIAL

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OF THE MOST IMPLACABLE OFFENDERS AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS.

6. CAN THE US FIND SUFFICIENT SUPPORT TO BLOCK URUGUAY? FIRST, WE SHOULD REJECT THE MORE CERTAIN BUT SHORTSIGHTED COURSE WHICH WOULD HAVE US THREATEN TO BOYCOTT THE GA IF IT WERE HELD IN MONTEVIDEO. IN THE FACE OF THIS THREAT MANY GOVERNMENTS WOULD SEEK TO FIND A FACE-SAVING WAY TO CHANGE THE SITE FROM MONTEVIDEO TO OAS HEADQUARTERS. IT IS POSSIBLE, HOWEVER, THAT WITH BRAZIL IN THE LEAD AND CAPITALIZING ON ACCEPTED PRINCIPLES PREVIOUSLY CITED PLUS ANTI-US SENTIMENT, THAT URUGUAY COULD GAIN THE REQUIRED TWO-THIRDS. WE WOULD THEN BE IN THE DEPLORABLE POSITION OF BACKING DOWN ON OUR THREAT OR VIOLATING THE WILL OF THE MAJORITY AND THE RULES OF THE CHARTER.

7. IF URUGUAY HAS DONE ITS WORK WELL IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO MOBILIZE A BLOCKING THIRD. I COUNT AS CERTAIN VOTES AGAINST URUGUAY (EITHER NAYS OR ABSTENTIONS) ONLY THE US, MEXICO, VENEZUELA, JAMAICA, TRINIDAD AND BARBADOS. TO MAKE UP THE REQUIRED NINE VOTES, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO FIND THREE MORE

ABSTENTIONS AMONG COSTA RICA, PANAMA, THE DOMINICAN
REPUBLIC OR COLOMBIA. THE THREAT OF A LOW-LEVEL
US DELEGATION MIGHT PROVE EFFECTIVE WITH SOME
MEMBER GOVERNMENTS.

8. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD MAKE THE ATTEMPT. IF WE
SUCCEED AGAINST THE ODDS, A CLEAR VICTORY; IF WE FAIL,
AT LEAST WE WILL HAVE MADE OUR POSITION CLEAR. IN
THIS CONNECTION, WE SHOULD VOTE NO, NOT ABSTAIN.
WHETHER THE OAS GOES TO MONTEVIDEO OR NOT IS SECONDARY
TO HOW IT GETS THERE. IF THE US LOSES AFTER ALL
OF AMBASSADOR MCGEE'S BEHIND-THE-SCENE'S WORK AND
FORTHRIGHT PUBLIC STATEMENT, THEN WE HAVE DONE OUR
BEST. WE THEN ABIDE BY THE RULE OF THE MAJORITY AND
TAKE OUR CASE INTO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT MONTEVIDEO.
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GOING TO MONTEVIDEO IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES COULD
IMPROVE OUR CHANCES OF ACHIEVING TOUGH RESOLUTIONS ON
HUMAN RIGHTS AS MANY GOVERNMENTS WHICH WILL HAVE
VOTED IN FAOR OF URUGUAY'S OFFER WILL BE ANXIOUS TO
PROVE TO US THAT THEIR VOTE DID NOT MEAN THEY ARE
NOT WITH US ON UNDILUTED HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES.
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